

SHIGELLOSIS

What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an intestinal infection caused by *Shigella* bacteria. The bacteria produce toxins that can attack the lining of the large intestine, causing swelling, ulcers on the intestinal wall and bloody diarrhea.

Symptoms of Shigellosis

The severity of the diarrhea sets Shigellosis apart from regular diarrhea. Symptoms of Shigellosis include:

- Abdominal cramps
- High fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Painful bowel movements

In very severe cases of Shigellosis, a person may have seizures, a stiff neck, a headache, extreme tiredness and confusion. Shigellosis can also lead to dehydration and, in rare cases, other complications like kidney failure.



How do People get Shigellosis?

Shigella bacteria can contaminate food and water supplies, especially in areas where the sanitation is not adequate. However, most of the time the bacteria are spread when a person comes into contact with another person's stool.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Shigellosis

The doctor may take a sample of your stool to see if it contains *Shigella* bacteria.

Most people with Shigellosis will recover on their own. Some may require fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics can be used to treat severe cases or to shorten the carrier phase, which may be important for food handlers, children in daycare or institutionalized individuals.

How Can I Help Prevent the Spread of Shigellosis?

Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent Shigellosis. The following precautions can help prevent the transmission of Shigellosis:

- Wash hands with soap carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages.
- Dispose of soiled diapers properly.
- Disinfect diaper changing areas after using them.
- Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings.
- Supervise hand washing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet.
- Do not prepare food for others while ill with diarrhea.
- Avoid swallowing water from ponds, lakes, or untreated pools.

For more information, contact a Public Health Nurse at the City-County Health Department at 454-6950 or visit www.cchdmt.org or www.cdc.gov